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# History of William Mitchell College of Law

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## HISTORY OF WILLIAM MITCHELL COLLEGE OF LAW

William Mitchell College of Law is the culmination of four separate mergers of colleges offering evening legal education in Minneapolis and St. Paul.<sup>160</sup> First incorporated as the St. Paul College of Law on November 28, 1900, the school was founded to “give the best and most complete course of legal study possible, and make its diploma an indisputable proof of the attainment of a high and uniform standard.”<sup>161</sup> Initially, sessions were held only in the evenings to

enable students to learn the theory and principles of the law, while during the day they may familiarize themselves with the practical duties of the profession in the law offices of the city. It also enables clerks in the various business houses, those in the public service, school teachers and other persons who are engaged during the day, to avail themselves of the privileges of the school. It is by this arrangement that the eminent lawyers and judges, who at other hours are actively engaged with the duties of their profession, can give their services.<sup>162</sup>

Founders of the St. Paul College of Law hoped to secure Justice William Mitchell as the first dean, however, Justice Mitchell died

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160. The idea of establishing a night law school in St. Paul was first suggested by Alfred F. Mason, an employee of West Publishing Company, to Clarence W. Halbert, a graduate of Yale Law School. Hallam, Foreword to [1940] St. Paul College of Law, Alumni Directory 3 (on file at William Mitchell Law Review office). The Ramsey County Bar Association formed an organizing committee, composed of Mr. Halbert, who became the College's first secretary, Ambrose Tighe, who became the College's first treasurer, Hiram F. Stevens, who became the College's first Dean, and Marcus D. Munn. *Id.* at 3-5; [1900-1901] St. Paul College of Law, Catalogue and Announcement 7 (1900) [hereinafter cited as Announcement] (on file at William Mitchell Law Review office). Classes commenced in September 1900. Hallam, *supra*, at 3; Announcement, *supra*, at 6. The incorporators and first Board of Trustees consisted of Hiram F. Stevens, Ambrose Tighe, Thomas D. O'Brien, Moses E. Clapp, and Clarence W. Halbert. Hallam, *supra*, at 4; Announcement, *supra*, at 5. For a brief history of the St. Paul College of Law, including biographical sketches of the founders, see Galles, *Five Become One: Mitchell to Mark Diamond Anniversary*, Wm. Mitchell Opinion, Apr. 1974, at 1, col. 1 [hereinafter cited as Galles, *Five Become One*]; Galles, *Founder and teacher was crusading advocate*, Wm. Mitchell Opinion, Mar. 1976, at 10, col. 1; Lamkin, *The Past and—William Mitchell—1961*, Wm. Mitchell Opinion, Dec. 1961, at 1, col. 1; Taurinskas, *History Highlighted (1900-1970): Wm. Mitchell Survives Tough Times*, Wm. Mitchell Opinion, Sept. 1970, at 3, col. 1.

161. Announcement, *supra* note 160, at 7.

162. *Id.* at 9-10.

on August 21, 1900, several weeks before the first classes began.<sup>163</sup> First quartered in rooms on the top floor of the Ramsey County Court House, in 1921 the St. Paul College of Law settled at Sixth Street and College Avenue in St. Paul.<sup>164</sup>



ST. PAUL COLLEGE OF LAW  
FOUNDED 1900

During the years 1912 through 1919, four new evening colleges of law were established in Minneapolis.<sup>165</sup> These schools were the Minneapolis College of Law,<sup>166</sup> the Northwestern College of

163. Hallam, *supra* note 160, at 3.

164. *See id.* at 1, 5; Announcement, *supra* note 160, at 15; [1921] St. Paul College of Law, The Judgment Roll (on file at William Mitchell Law Review office); Tarbox, Foreword to [1921] St. Paul College of Law, The Judgment Roll (on file at William Mitchell Law Review office); Tiffany, Foreword to [1917] St. Paul College of Law, The Judgment Roll (on file at William Mitchell Law Review office).

165. The new evening law schools were established in response to the elimination of evening classes at the University of Minnesota Law School. *See* A. Johnson, History of William Mitchell College of Law 3 (unpublished manuscript on file at William Mitchell Law Review office); Galles, *College's Founders Were Legal Reformers Of Their Day*, Wm. Mitchell Opinion, Feb. 1975, at 8, col. 1 [hereinafter cited as Galles, *College's Founders*]. *See generally* Galles, *Five Become One*, *supra* note 160; Lamkin, *supra* note 160; Taurinskas, *supra* note 160.

166. *See* A. Johnson, *supra* note 165, at 7-9; Galles, *College's Founders*, *supra* note 165; Galles, *Five Become One*, *supra* note 160; Lamkin, *supra* note 160; Taurinskas, *supra* note 160.

Law,<sup>167</sup> the Minnesota College of Law,<sup>168</sup> and the YMCA College of Law.<sup>169</sup> In 1928 the Northwestern College of Law was absorbed by the Minneapolis College of Law,<sup>170</sup> and the Minnesota College of Law and the YMCA College of Law merged under the name of the Minnesota College of Law.<sup>171</sup> In 1940 the Minnesota College of Law and the Minneapolis College of Law merged to form the Minneapolis-Minnesota College of Law.<sup>172</sup> The fourth and final merger occurred in 1956, when the St. Paul College of Law and the Minneapolis-Minnesota College of Law merged to form the William Mitchell College of Law.<sup>173</sup> In 1976 William Mitchell College of Law moved to its present location at 875 Summit Avenue in St. Paul.<sup>174</sup>



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167. See A. Johnson, *supra* note 165, at 4-6; Galles, *College's Founders*, *supra* note 165; Galles, *Five Become One*, *supra* note 160; Lamkin, *supra* note 160; Taurinskas, *supra* note 160.

168. See A. Johnson, *supra* note 165, at 7, 10; Galles, *College's Founders*, *supra* note 165; Galles, *Five Become One*, *supra* note 160; Lamkin, *supra* note 160; Taurinskas, *supra* note 160.

169. See A. Johnson, *supra* note 165, at 7, 9; Galles, *College's Founders*, *supra* note 165; Galles, *Five Become One*, *supra* note 160; Lamkin, *supra* note 160; Taurinskas, *supra* note 160.

170. See A. Johnson, *supra* note 165, at 5-7; Galles, *College's Founders*, *supra* note 165; Lamkin, *supra* note 160; Taurinskas, *supra* note 160.

171. See A. Johnson, *supra* note 165, at 9; Galles, *College's Founders*, *supra* note 165; Lamkin, *supra* note 160; Taurinskas, *supra* note 160.

172. See A. Johnson, *supra* note 165, at 11-12; Galles, *College's Founders*, *supra* note 165; Lamkin, *supra* note 160; Taurinskas, *supra* note 160.

173. See A. Johnson, *supra* note 165, at 16-23; Galles, *College's Founders*, *supra* note 165; Galles, *Five Become One*, *supra* note 160; Lamkin, *supra* note 160; Taurinskas, *supra* note 160.

174. See A. Johnson, *supra* note 165, at 30; Wm. Mitchell Opinion, Nov. 1975, at 1, col. 1.